

JOB DESCRIPTION

TITLE OF JOB: Self Advocacy Group Facilitator (Asperger's)

SERVICE/PROJECT: Impact Advocacy Service

REFERENCE NO:

CLOSING DATE FOR APPLICATIONS

HOURS PER WEEK: 22

PERMANENT POST:

STARTING SALARY: Band 3, NJC Point 22, £21,496 p.a. pro rata (Actual Salary £12,781)

HOLIDAY ENTITLEMENT: 27 days annual leave plus 3 extra days at Christmas and the usual statutory holidays, pro rata per annum

LINE MANAGED BY: Self Advocacy Team Leader

RESPONSIBLE FOR: To support members of the 2 Asperger's self-advocacy groups in West Sussex.

For an informal chat about the job please ring: Lesley Durbin or Harriet Wilson on 01903 730044. This post is exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act (1974) and the successful applicant will be subject to an enhanced DBS check.

Background and Aims of Service:

In February 2012 Impact Advocacy Service was successful in a bid to set up 2 Self Advocacy groups for people with Asperger's in West Sussex. Asperger's Voice covers the north of the county (with meetings usually in Burgess Hill and Horsham) and Asperger's Syndrome Self Advocacy (ASSA) covers the south of the county (Littlehampton). These groups aim to give Self Advocates a stronger voice to improve services for people with Asperger's in West Sussex.

Tasks related to General Meetings:

- Facilitate Asperger's Voice and ASSA group meetings.
- Ensure a risk assessment is completed for all group meetings.
- Work with the relevant committee member(s) to prepare for Meetings e.g. book speakers, prepare an agenda and slides.
- Email/post out/ring all members to remind them about meeting.
- Ensure that rooms are booked for meetings.
- To facilitate the group to set up/clear up room for meeting.
- To support the group to make refreshments for meeting and clear away afterwards.
- Ensure that all members have completed a membership form, with emergency contact details etc.
- Have members' contact numbers and emergency contact information on them for all meetings.
- To identify and print out useful information about events etc., to give to members in the meeting.
- To support the group in group meetings to follow the agenda, and make sure meeting runs smoothly.
- Ensure that all members feel supported, welcomed and have the opportunity to speak at the meeting.
- To encourage the group to welcome new members, by introducing themselves and introducing them to other members.
- To support the group to manage group dynamics and resolve any conflict that arises.

Tasks related to supporting the group committees:

- To facilitate committee meetings as required to enable each group to run smoothly.
- To support the committees with identifying topics to discuss, putting together the agendas and relevant information and circulating them as required.

- To ensure rooms are booked for meetings as required.
- To take notes or to support the committee members to take minutes for meetings and distribute these as agreed by the group.
- To provide support to committee members with carrying out tasks relevant to the work and effective running of the group and provide regular updates to the committee on the progress of delegated tasks, as required.
- Supporting the committees of both groups to identify and apply for funding when needed.
- To support the committees to keep accounts up to date and provide a monthly update for committee meetings.

Promotion of the group:

- To make contact with potential group members, send welcome pack and arrange to meet them if needed.
- To ensure that the Committee know that a new member will be coming to the group.
- To promote the group by getting articles in the press, attending promotional events, visiting local groups etc.

Autism Partnership Board (APB) and other meetings:

- Support representatives from each group to attend the APB meetings, to feedback information to members and represent the views of the groups.
- Support group members and representatives to participate in Task Groups and report back to members and to the APB.
- Support representatives to feedback information to members and represent the views of the group at the Board.
- Support group members to attend other meetings relevant to the groups' work and aims.
- Attend meetings throughout West Sussex and Impact offices in Brighton.

Facebook Page/other social media:

- If required by the Committees, to monitor social media and update regularly with information about the group or useful links and information for members.

Projects/Campaigns:

- To support the groups to identify projects or campaigns which fit with the aims of the group and interests of members.
- Support the group with this project / campaign (for example by organising and facilitating meetings about them).

Tasks Related to ASSA:

- To facilitate a monthly drop in for members, where members can be supported to undertake work related to the group and have some emotional support in relation to issues they may be facing.

Quality Checks:

- To facilitate self advocates to undertake a quality checking exercise on areas of service provided across statutory, health, independent and voluntary services. WSCC Commissioners and the Autism Partnership Board will identify the area of service each year, and will provide an outline brief.

PERSON SPECIFICATION

Essential Skills:	
A good understanding of and empathy for people with Asperger's / Autism Spectrum Conditions (ASC)	The post involves working closely with self advocates who have Asperger's / Autism Spectrum Conditions (ASC). The post holder would need to have empathy for what it is like to have an ASC and understand the challenges that this may bring. For example the post holder may need to adapt the way they communicate or change the physical environment to work successfully with members.
An understanding of advocacy and self-advocacy groups	This role is around supporting members to run their own self advocacy groups. It is important that the post holder understands the principles of advocacy and how these apply to self-advocacy groups and is able to work with each of the groups in an empowering way.
Communication skills	<p>a) The post holder will need to be able to establish rapport with group members and communicate information both verbally and via email in a clear, accurate and concise manner.</p> <p>b) They will need to have good comprehension skills and attention to detail to ensure effective understanding of people with Asperger's / ASC and to help members get their views across effectively in meetings.</p> <p>c) They will also need to be able to communicate verbally and via email to a range of professionals to promote the groups and organise events that the self-advocacy groups may host.</p>
Patience and resilience	The post holder will need to demonstrate that they have patience to be able to work successfully with group members. For example self advocates may need to spend a lot of time looking at the details of an idea before making a decision. Some self advocates may come across as blunt with their feedback. The post holder will need to have some resilience in not taking this feedback personally and being able to maintain relationships with self advocates.
Evidence of having good time keeping skills and being reliable	Being reliable and being on time is extremely important for many group members, as they can become anxious if the group supporter is late or does not turn up. The role also requires the supporter to open and set up venues before

	meetings, when some members arrive early. The post holder needs to have previous experience of having a role where they have demonstrated good time keeping and reliability.
Experience of managing your own workload and being able to prioritise tasks	The post holder is required to work independently often in different geographical locations around the county. There are often a number of email, telephone and work tasks that need to be prioritised into the post hours.
IT skills	The post holder is required to use Office 365 to send emails and use MS Teams. They will need to be proficient in Word and PowerPoint to complete reports and documents for the groups. They also need to have some experience of Excel spreadsheets to support with group accounts. Both groups have Facebook and Twitter accounts which the post holder would be required to update when needed. At present meetings are via Zoom so experience of using Zoom would be essential.
Ability to attend evening meetings as required.	There are normally 4 evening meetings per month. Pre Covid 19, evening meetings were generally held in Littlehampton and Burgess Hill and Horsham. There are currently 4 evening meetings per month held over Zoom.
Car driver, who is willing to use own car for work	Due to the late (eg 9.30pm) finish of some meetings, the widely dispersed locations, the rural nature of West Sussex and limited public transport, a car driver is needed for this role. The post-holder needs to be able to attend meetings throughout West Sussex, and Impact offices in Brighton, as required.
Demonstrable commitment to equal opportunities	Impact Advocacy is committed to working towards a fairer society for all groups in the community. The post holder needs to share these values and support the self-advocacy groups to implement the values of equal opportunities within their groups.

Desirable Skills and Experience:

Experience of working with people with autism	The post requires working closely with group members who all have autism. Experience of working successfully with people with autism is therefore desirable.
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<p>Experience of facilitating group meetings</p>	<p>The post holder will need to facilitate groups meetings and/or support committee members to run the meetings smoothly, so previous experience of taking on this role is desirable. There can be disagreements between members which the post holder will need to support the group to address in a sensitive and conflict resolving manner.</p>
<p>Experience of being involved in user led research</p>	<p>The post involves supporting self-advocates to undertake Quality Checking research on local services. This can involve supporting members to design questionnaires, undertake interviews and write up reports.</p>
<p>Experience of fundraising</p>	<p>The post involves supporting members to fund raise for their groups, including funding applications for grants and from trust funds.</p>